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ABSTRACT

This paper describes a pioneering attempt to create the role of organizational specialist in a school district. Needs for organizational specialists are cited, the implementation and training of specialists is described, and the strengths and weaknesses of the project are detailed. Suggestions for other school districts are given in a final summary. (Author)

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Organizational Specialists in a School District

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The role of organizational specialist is urgently needed in many school districts. In the past, schools have spent time and money on subject-matter specialists, instructional supervisors, social workers, psychologists, counselors, and nurses, even though the services of some of these professionals have been available to relatively small clusters of teachers and students. Meanwhile, school districts have not employed specialists who would attempt to improve the communication patterns, as well as group processes and organizational procedures that affect everyone. This paper describes a pioneering attempt to create the role of organizational specialist in a school district.

organizational tension prompts need

As school districts become larger, interrelations of roles and organizational procedures become more complex. Under these conditions, staff members often feel pushed and pulled by impersonal forces they are unable to control. The resulting role conflicts, interpersonal tensions, and personal frustrations can undermine the quality of instruction. Teachers cease to demand the kind of support in collaboration, material, and scheduling that would maximize the effectiveness of their teaching; they settle into a rule-bound routine, punching the clock, and blaming others for their frustrations. They seek the secondary satisfactions that militant unions might bring them and fear the strain that curricular and organizational innovations might put on the already over-brittle norms in school and district.

Footnote:

The first and third authors of this paper performed as two of the exterior consultants in the project; the second author was the coordinator of the cadre of specialists in Kent. We wish to thank the Kent, Washington school district for their collaboration.

ALTERNATIVE STRATEGIES

There are at least two effective strategies of change a district can adopt when faced with these organizational tensions. Programs can be modified in several buildings by experimenting with successful practices from outside the district; e.g., the middle school, the multi-unit school, or the school-without-walls. Typically, new organizational structures such as these are developed by innovators outside the district and then adopted by the district when the time is appropriate.

A second strategy designated self-renewal by John Gardner (1963), is to build new norms and procedures that enable district personnel to monitor the changing community, to compare what they see happening with what the district's goals imply ought to happen, and to establish new organizational forms whenever the movement toward a goal falls below a criterion. The innovative forms such as new ways of making decisions or new ways of defining leadership roles can often be created by personnel within the district. A school district characterized by self-renewal uses formal procedures for group problem solving, assesses its own progress toward goals, and searches out innovative practices as needed.

Both strategies gain in power as they are used in tandem. A self-renewing school district will quite often adopt new procedures developed elsewhere. Such adoptions, however, should be based on attempts to reduce discrepancies between the district's educational goals and the current state of affairs and not be made simply because the innovation is in vogue. All too often, innovations have been adopted without adequate diagnosis, problem solving, and a search for innovative practices within the district.

Some schools have achieved more capacity for self-renewal through organizational training (see, e.g., Schmuck and Runkel, 1970). Organizational training seeks to increase the effectiveness of groups as task-oriented entities and tries to lead school personnel to function more effectively as components of working bodies carrying out the specific tasks of the school. The key to successful organizational training lies in the school's capacity to solve its own problems by using the resources already present in the faculty. These resources include information about different curricula, willingness to take risks, and creativity in teaching. Staff resources are not simply ideas residing in a filing cabinet. Rather, resources are truly available only when the work-group calls upon members for fresh ways of doing things, when each member feels unafraid in offering his own ideas for use, and when the norms of the group enable a new idea to move into action with reasonable speed and commitment. We believe these capabilities are enhanced by (1) increasing understanding on the part of members of the district of how people in different parts of the total school district affect one another; (2) developing clear communication networks, up, down, and laterally; (3) increasing understanding on the part of members of the district of the various educational goals in different parts of the district; and (4) involving more personnel at all levels in decision-making.

THE INTERVENTION PROCESS

The outside organizational consultant who intervenes in a school district should organize his work in three stages:

Stage 1: Improving Communication Skills:

Build increased openness and ease of interpersonal communication among the district personnel by training them in such communication skills as paraphrasing, describing behavior, describing own feelings, and checking their perceptions of others' feelings. This stage develops constructive openness, increasing confidence among the staff that communication with colleagues can be worthwhile.

Stage 2: Changing Norms:

Build new norms that support helpfulness among the staff. The consultant can use the desires of professional personnel to ameliorate some of their actual problems as a lever with which to change group norms. For example, the consultant can invite the educators to state some frustrations that they are encountering in their jobs and to practice a sequence of problem-solving steps to reduce these frustrations (see Schmuck and Runkel, 1970). Systematic problem solving not only reduces frustrations but also yields the satisfaction of knowing that others value the contribution one has made to the solution. Changes in organizational norms of openness and candor occur when the consultant requires staff members to behave in new ways in their actual work-groups enabling their colleagues to observe the new patterns of behavior in the school setting.

Stage 3: Structural Change:

Build new functions, roles, procedures, or policies. These new structures should become part of the basic fabric of the school district. They should be formal, institutionalized, and have budgetary support.

ESTABLISHING

ORGANIZATIONAL SPECIALISTS

As part of a two-year project, consultants from the Center for the Advanced Study of Educational Administration (CASEA) at Eugene, Oregon, established a cadre of organizational specialists in the school district at Kent, Washington. Consultants from outside the district launched the organizational training but later turned over the task of continued training in the skills of self-renewal to organizational specialists within the district.

Persons entered the cadre from positions of teacher, principal, counselor, curriculum specialist, and assistant superintendent; each performs only part time in the role of organizational specialist. The cadre is intended to function as an organizational sub-structure for self-renewal; it has connections to many other subsystems and is able to respond flexibly to organizational problems as they arise in the Kent district. The specialists do not relieve others of their problems; they do not solve problems for others. Rather, they enable others to solve problems more efficiently and with more permanent results by improving certain organizational sub-processes. In particular, the specialists can produce a lively ability for self-renewal by following these guides:

(1) by diagnosing the discrepancies that exist between the district's goals and its actual organizational performance,

(2) by assessing the levels of role clarity in the district,

(3) by checking on the flow of communication in the district,

(4) by assessing the extent to which the district has a repertoire of interpersonal techniques that aid collaboration in small task-groups,

(5) by assessing the variety of human resources available for solving problems in the district,

(6) by assessing the means by which the district selects some innovative activities to be maintained and others to be rejected, and

(7) by assessing the methods the district uses for institutionalizing innovations after they have been judged suitable and worth keeping.

In later sections of this paper we will discuss the actions taken by the organizational specialists in Kent to implement these guides. The organizational training that was carried out by CASEA consultants to bring into being the cadre of organizational specialists is detailed below.

intervention by CASEA consultants

Organizational training events for several important parts of the Kent District were carried out by CASEA consultants for one year before the cadre of organizational specialists was started. Although most personnel was aware of the training about 30% never were directly involved because of limited time and resources of the CASEA staff. These training

events were designed to increase the communication and problem solving skills of teams of personnel filling key positions in the district. The consultants' plan was to reveal the benefits of systematic training in communications skills and group problem solving to teams of personnel in a variety of influential positions. One of the consultants' principal interests early in the project was to articulate the complex relationships that existed between staff and line personnel.

Stage 1: Training for Personnel with Line Functions

In April, 1968, the consultants invited to the first training event certain influential personnel performing line functions in the district. The trainees included the superintendent and his cabinet, the elementary and secondary principals, and selected teachers who were leaders within the Kent Education Association. At least one teacher from every building attending the meeting, along with the key officers in the association.

The event lasted four days, but only the superintendent's cabinet was present all of the time. On the first day, before others arrived, the superintendent and his cabinet discussed ways in which communication was breaking down among them, the lack of clarity in their role definitions, the ambiguous norms that existed in the cabinet, and finally their strengths as a group.

On the second day, the principals joined the cabinet in a specially designed confrontation that brought into the open organizational problems seen by each group as involving the other. The surfaced problems were earmarked for future problem solving. First, the cabinet and principals divided into three units: cabinet, elementary, and secondary principals. Next, each group met separately to consider helpful and unhelpful work-related behavior of the other two groups toward their own group. At the end of two hours, all agreed-upon actions of the other groups were written in large letters on sheets of newsprint. The session ended with a brief period of training in the communication skills of paraphrasing and behavior description.

Next, one group sat in a circle, surrounded by members of the other two groups. Participants sitting in the outer ring read aloud the descriptions they had written of the inside group. A member of the inner circle then paraphrased the description to make sure that his colleagues understood it. After all items describing the inside group were read, the remaining two groups took their turns in the center circle. During this step, group members in the inner circle who were receiving descriptions of their own group were <u>not</u> allowed to defend their group against the presumed allegations made by the others.

After this step, the three groups again met separately to find evidence that would support the descriptions they had received; they were instructed to recall examples of their own behavior that could have given the other group its impressions. The three groups then came together once again with one group forming an inner circle. Each inner group told the others of the evidence they had recalled to verify the perceptions of the others. Once again, the inner group was discouraged from defending itself; members were asked simply to describe the behavioral events they thought supported the others' perceptions.

On the evening of the second day, teachers arrived to join the principals and cabinet and for four hours all of the key line personnel in the Kent district were together. A modified confrontation design was continued, culminating in a meeting in which the three groups indicated the organizational problems they thought existed in the Kent district. Discussion was lively, penetrating, and constructive; most personnel had never before confronted persons in other positions so openly with their perceptions of district problems. The principals went back to their buildings the next day, leaving time for teachers and cabinet to interact with one another. On the fourth day, the cabinet met alone to schedule some dates for problem solving.

Stage 2: Training for Principals in Human Relations Skills

All principals were strongly urged to participate in a human relations laboratory in June, 1968 that was designed and executed by the National Training Laboratories of the Northwest. In general, the training brought about increased skill in interpersonal relations and

increased awareness of the effects of one's own responses on others (see Thomas, 1969).

Stage 3: Personnel With Staff Functions

Personnel in staff roles in the divisions of Student Personnel Services and Curriculum Development attended a three-day conference in September, 1968; they were joined for one-half day by the principals.

The organizational training began with the staffs of Student Personnel and Curriculum meeting separately to discuss the helps and hindrances that were occurring within each of their groups, with special attention to interpersonal processes within the groups. Specially chosen exercises made the interpersonal helps and hindrances easier to see. After this, the two groups, with the principals as a third group, participated in a period of confrontation. Just as in April, the confrontation unearthed a number of problems for systematic work. Finally, each group began a systematic process of problem solving (see Schmuck and Runkel, 1970) and made plans to continue these efforts back home.

Stage 4: The Business Department

In November, 1968, the business personnel who had not yet been involved in the training were given two days of training in communication skills, group exercises, and problem solving. The training was similar in spirit and design to the events with the line and staff personnel except that no confrontations with other role groups took place.

Stage 5: Selected School Staffs

From September, 1968 to April, 1969, the CASEA consultants worked with five different school staffs in the Kent district. These training events were aimed at introducing a large number of teachers to the benefits of organizational training and to reach organizational subsystems within the district other than the administrative personnel. In general, these training events had small impact, especially as compared to the trainings with line and staff personnel. The chief effect was to increase the awareness of a number of personnel of the meaning and procedures of organizational training.

Perhaps the most significant result of these interventions was that many of the volunteers to be trained as future organizational specialists came from the buildings in which some training took place.

training the organizational specialists

In the Spring of 1969, information was circulated throughout the district that a workshop would be held in June, 1969 for Kent personnel who wished to become organizational specialists in the district. The mimeographed circular stated that the specialist would be knowledgeable and skillful in group processes. He would serve on committees to give feedback or as a trainer for special groups within the district. The consultants hoped that personnel from all hierarchical levels would volunteer to become organizational specialists.

The first step in establishing the role of organizational specialist in the district had been taken already when the school board approved the original project with the CASEA consultants. But it was necessary that the plan be supported with released time, a part-time coordinator, and the blessings of the district's administration. There were several tense moments at the end of the first year of organizational training when the teachers were negotiating for a new contract; early reports indicated that adequate financial support might not be available for the specialists. However, commitments for the project were high for both the teachers and the administrators, and the matter was resolved with 10 days released time for each specialist during the school year and enough money for a coordinator to allocate 3/10 of his time to the project.

Applications were solicited from all professional members of the Kent district and twenty-three were selected. The recruits represented a wide cross-section of the district: teachers, counselors, elementary and secondary principals, specialists in curriculum and student personnel, and assistant superintendents who were members of the superintendent's cabinet.

The first (and major) training event for the specialists was a two-week workshop during June, 1969. The goals of the

first half of this workshop were to introduce the specialists to many of the skills, exercises, and procedures that the consultants had found useful in carrying out organizational training (see, Schmuck and Runkel, 1968). Other goals were to provide the specialists with an opportunity to explore the impact of their behavior on a group, to establish the cadre as a cohesive and supportive unit, and to give members practice in leading organizational training activities. Participants spent the first three days of the workshop in small groups experiencing many exercises, with each rotating to the role of co-trainer to get training experience. Each exercise was designed to make salient a certain type of group process such as interpersonal control, sharing of resources, or coordinating efforts and making certain "lessons" easy to comprehend. It was hoped that the specialists would learn how to use the exercises by experiencing them and examining their experiences.

During the last two days of the first week, participants were asked to design some exercises that would help strengthen their group as the cadre of organizational specialists. They carried out the exercises with their peers and engaged in critical discussion of them. The specialists reviewed and practiced the communicative skills of paraphrasing, behavior description, describing own feelings, and checking one's perceptions of the feelings of others.

For the second week, the specialists divided into six subgroups; each subgroup was convened by a CASEA consultant. The entire group of specialists determined some potential target groups within the school district and each subgroup then chose one of these target groups for its work. Among the targeted groups were several schools that were changing their programs in the coming academic year, the principal and department heads at a senior high school, the elementary principals and counselors who were serving elementary youngsters, and a community advisory group made up of parents. The remainder of the second week was spent establishing goals for the training to be conducted with the target groups, gathering diagnostic data about them, analyzing the data to establish forces operating in the target groups, and designing training events. CASEA consultants worked closely with these subgroups, anticipating the follow-up they would give to the specialists during the academic year.

CASEA consultants worked with the Kent specialists during the first two-thirds of the 1969-70 academic year, withdrawing in March, 1970. Thus, the training events that were engineered by the Kent specialists were observed and criticized by the outside consultants. This collaboration was part of a deliberate plan to support the development of training skills within the Kent cadre. Approximately ten different training events occurred with CASEA assistance. Most of these events were successful in raising interest in the district in improving communication, group processes, and organizational problem solving.

work of the organizational specialists

During the first year of operation, the organizational specialists focused primarily on four target groups: an elementary school staff moving toward a multi-unit structure, the superintendent and his cabinet, teachers interested in improving their communication skills, and a junior high school staff. Limited work was carried out with a group of parents and with a senior high school. Of the four primary interventions, three appeared to be successfully executed.

The most successful training was carried out at the elementary school that was moving toward a multi-unit organization. Several factors in this school were conducive to organizational training. The school had few walls; the newness and freedom of the physical plant encouraged the staff to be creative about teaching strategies. The principal had been trained as an organizational specialist; he felt secure with the training process and encouraged the more retiring staff members to become involved. A final indicator of potential success for the training was that some of the teachers aided the principal in selecting the particular specialists who were to work with the staff.

The first training with this school took place in August just before school began; it lasted for two days. The first day was spent in group exercises and in practicing communication skills. On the second day, the staff participated in group problem solving, making plans to short-circuit organizational problems that might arise during the academic year. The

specialists met again with the faculty for three half-day sessions during September, October, and November. (These sessions were easily arranged because the staff was double-shifting until Christmas.)

Assessment of the training indicated that the teachers thought that the specialists had developed a well-organized training design, that the teachers were experiencing clear communication with the principal, and that they were working smoothly and effectively in their teaching teams. Several teachers commented that they were gratified to see the specialists using the skills they were teaching.

A second successful intervention occurred when another team of specialists worked with the superintendent and his staff during cabinet meetings. Before any help from specialists was given, the superintendent and his staff generally agreed that communication at their cabinet meetings was poor. Participants seemed uncertain of their roles and hesitated to disagree at staff meetings with the superintendent even when debate might improve the group's decision making. Few decisions were made at the meetings; instead, cabinet members thought that decisions were being made on the outside in unknown ways. Other staff members in the district distrusted the lack of openness they perceived on the part of the cabinet. Much confusion and distrust persisted in the district.

In February, 1970, the superintendent decided to open the cabinet meetings to broader participation. The group was re-named "staff" and several role-groups (including principals and teachers) were invited to send representatives. In March, the superintendent and his staff agreed that one or two organizational specialists should attend staff meetings to serve as official observers of the communication processes.

As a result of feedback from the specialists at twelve weekly meetings, the following changes in group processes occurred:

(1) The superintendent periodically stepped out of the role of "presenter." Presentations were made by a variety of participants.

(2) The superintendent relinquished the role of convener (chairman or moderator) to participate more freely in the discussions.

(3) Agreements were made by the group on procedures to help the meetings run smoothly. The superintendent (who had been expected to prescribe such procedural rules) acted merely as another member while these agreements were being reached.

(4) Time at the end of the meeting was used to discuss (debrief) the group processes that occurred during that meeting. The specialists gave feedback during this time on their observations.

As a result of these changes, less adverse criticism of the meetings was made by participants and less distrust seemed to be manifested by others in the district toward the superintendent.

A third successful intervention was a two-course sequence prepared for interested teachers in the district. In the first course, entitled "Techniques in Communication," the communication skills of paraphrasing, behavior description, describing own feelings, and checking one's perception of others' feelings were taught. Also, the participants experienced several group exercises and learned how to carry out an organizational problem-solving sequence. The second course, entitled "Communications and Interpersonal Relations," was an advanced training experience in which the communication skills, exercises, and procedures were reviewed and related to group processes in the classroom. Students who successfully completed both courses and who were enthusiastic about them became candidates for organizational specialist.

Although no intervention created a great deal of strain or adverse criticism, one can fairly be called unsuccessful. The negative experience took place in a training event designed for a junior high school. One of the organizational specialists had reported that some staff members in one of the junior high schools were seen by other faculty as failing to take their share of responsibility for encouraging students to behave properly in the halls. The resulting tensions--so the specialists understood--had

created several warring subgroups on the faculty; consequently, the faculty as a whole communicated and worked together very poorly. A team of specialists was assigned to the building and their conversations with the principal started during July, 1969.

In November the specialists were taken aback to hear the teachers in the building state that the problem no longer existed. They discovered that during the summer the principal had taken steps to correct the lack of clarity about discipline in a way acceptable to most teachers. But the specialists did not learn of these steps until they had carried out several training sessions at the school. The specialists had intended the training to culminate in a problem-solving process to work on clarifying staff norms about disciplining students. The school staff was surprised that the consultants raised discipline as a problem soon after they had worked on it. The specialists were unsure about how to respond, imagining that some of the teachers were unrealistically defending the existing condition of the school. The resulting confusions were followed by antagonistic remarks toward the specialists and a demand that they stop the training until further notice.

By the end of February, 1970, the CASEA consultants were giving no aid to the organizational specialists in Kent in selecting tasks, designing training, or carrying out the training. The specialists made the transition very smoothly. By the end of February, they had laid plans for work well into the summer. By the end of the summer they had conducted organizational training ranging from half a day to a full week with seven elementary schools, the superintendent and his immediate staff, the program specialists within the Curriculum Division, a group of principals, some groups of parents, and a group of 80 students in a "multi-ethnic camp." Moreover, they had laid plans for the following year that included some continued or advanced work and some new work.

the role of coordinator

A key role in helping the specialists to function effectively was carried out by the coordinator. Many of his duties were quite similar to those carried out by curriculum coordinators; he handled budget arrangements, stored relevant training materials in his office, kept careful records of the project, served as convener of the specialists' steering committee, and worked closely with colleges in the State of Washington to arrange for training courses to receive college credit.

Some of his other duties were unique in the district. Because the organizational specialists cut across all important jobs in the district and because they served the entire system, the coordinator reported directly to the superintendent. All projects were discussed with the superintendent before they were launched.

The coordinator served as an active link between the specialists and the rest of the district. When the coordinator received a request for specialists' services, he and the person or group requesting the service typically listed the particular specialists who would be mutually acceptable. Only those listed would then be asked about their availability. In relaying requests to the specialists, the coordinator ordered the requests so as to rotate the work fairly evenly; the object was to avoid developing an elite corps who might become the only ones to take on difficult training tasks. As the project gained prestige and was recognized by other school districts as valuable, the coordinator processed all out-of-district requests for services with the steering committee.

lessons for other districts

A cadre of organizational specialists in a school district is one way of increasing the self-renewing character of the district. Especially when the specialists are drawn from different roles and hierarchical levels in a district, their work together can build useful techniques whereby intra-district communications are clarified and constructive orientations are taken to problem solving. The success of the specialists depends on their ability to open up communication and to improve problem-solving skills in ways that allow existing resources to be used. Certain preconditions for a successful cadre of organizational specialists can be sketched as a result of our experiences in this project.

From the beginning of the project, all significant role groups within a district should be involved in defining objectives and delineating problems. Second, a vertically organized group of persons of high influence should attend a short training event in which organizational training techniques are demonstrated. The demonstration should explicitly reveal the differences between organizational training and sensitivity training (see Schmuck, Runkel, and Langmeyer, 1969). Third, this high-influence group should form a steering committee for the project from a subgroup of itself. The steering committee should decide on a means of advertising and of selecting the recruits for the training. These recruits should represent most of the significant professional roles in the district. Fourth, the specialists should experience intensive initial training of two or three weeks in which they learn how to perform as group facilitators. Finally, the cadre of specialists should try out their training skills in the district under the guidance of outside consultants. The outsiders should withdraw after about six months of help.

the training program: strengths and weaknesses

Experiences in Kent indicate a number of strengths in our method. We can point to a number of features of the project that speeded and heightened the effectiveness of the cadre of organizational specialists in their work in the district. Members of the district were able to comprehend something of the probable role of the organizational specialists through actual participation in some of the training that had been conducted by the CASEA consultants. (Actually, almost everyone who applied for training as organizational specialists had experienced the work of CASEA first-hand.) This fact minimized false anticipations on the part of applicants and gave the two-week training something of a head start.

Members of the district with whom the specialists had to interact also, because of participating in CASEA-led events, had some familiarity with the kind of work the specialists would be doing. The superintendent, for example, knew what the specialists were talking about when they proposed to help with the process during his staff meetings. Principals of schools knew what they were contracting for when they asked for help from the specialists. This familiarity lessened the likelihood of crossed signals, misapplications, and disappointments. The familiarity with the specialist's sort of work on the part of others in the district also resulted in a high level of confidence and support from others. The superintendent supported the work by allowing one of the curriculum specialists in the district to serve some time as coordinator of the cadre. He also supported the specialists by releasing ten days a year for each one's work as a specialist. The local education association, along with a newly formed group of principals, also supported efforts of the specialists in various ways.

The variety of jobs represented among the specialists made available to them the resources of those very jobs. These resources included intimate knowledge of particular schools, liaison with the local education association, and easy access to the superintendent's ear.

The specialists were soon recognized as available to any segment of the district. No doubt this occurred because the wide range of jobs among the specialists prevented their being looked on as an adjunct of any one school or division, and also because they sought out, for their early projects, work that would take them into different segments of the district.

A norm was established early that maintained respect for diversity among the specialists. As early as the end of February, the steering committee of the organizational specialists (OSs) had stated that members of the district could participate in the work of the Kent OSs in several ways: (1) as an occasional observer and reporter, (2) as an instructor in a course, (3) as an active member of a team of trainers in a particular intervention but not as a regular member of the OSs with duties to the OSs as a body, (4) as a regular member of the OSs, and (5) as a regular member with additional duty as a member of the steering committee. This tolerance of various roles within the OSs has enabled the OSs to make optimum use of the talents and time of each person who works with them. Moreover, the gradation of responsibility among the roles provides a natural channel for developing new members of the body as a whole.

Our theory of organizational development leads us to believe that a key cause of the successful functioning of the OSs was their

being viewed by themselves and by others not as a mere list of individuals, but as a team or sub-system within the district--with as clear a group identity as a school or a central-office division. We produced this sub-system character among the OSs by giving them tasks during training that increased their interdependence and their readiness to call upon one another for help with the expectation of receiving it. The sub-system character, in turn, makes it easy for the OSs to allocate duties, establish and disband sub-teams, and call upon the resources of one another on short notice.

As it evolved, the steering committee's success heightened the team-like feelings among the specialists. Members of the steering committee were selected from those specialists who wished to serve. Communication to all specialists was carried out by the coordinator sending out minutes of all meetings. Each of the steering committee members has felt obliged to also communicate the results of meetings to those specialists with whom he has regular contact.

Our theory also leads us to believe that the effectiveness of the OSs is enhanced by the strategy of conducting training for organizational development not merely with individuals, but with the groups through which people carry out their actual jobs; faculties of departments or schools, a planning committee consisting of departments heads, and members of a central-office division. The OSs do not look on the course they conduct in communicative skills as ends in themselves, but rather as preparation for later work with those same people in their natural work groups. The policy of training work groups minimizes the problem of transfer of training. Informal reports of the work done with the faculty of seven elementary schools in August, 1970, indicate that this strategy is working out successfully.

An OS is prohibited from working in that role within his home office or building. The Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum Development does not conduct organizational training among his own curriculum consultants, and the principal or teacher does not train faculty in his own building. This policy gives each OS the the strengths of being on "outsider:" trainees are more willing to expose their interpersonal stresses than they would otherwise be.

Finally, the development of systematic procedures to renew itself represents another strength of the OSs. The inservice training needs of the specialists were listed by the steering committee. Next, a few training sessions were held for the specialists with several more scheduled in the future. Plans were made to introduce interested staff members into the cadre of specialists and these have begun to be implemented.

The project also suffered some weaknesses. In the early part of the project, sites for interventions were picked mostly by the OSs; they did not arise at the initiative of the people occupying those sites. An example of the result of this way of doing things occurred at the junior high school we mentioned earlier. Aside from the fact that the OSs used out-of-date diagnostic information, many teachers in the building felt that the OSs' help was being imposed upon them. This feeling would have been lessened or absent had the school invited the OSs to work with them. One way OSs can give a school the opportunity to invite them in (and increase the likelihood of such an invitation) is to make opportunities for the faculty to discuss its own problems within itself, the OSs serving as little more than conveners of the discussions until an opportunity arises to offer the services of their other skills.

A second weakness, with psychological effects similar to those of the first, was the perception on the part of many of the Kent staff that the specialists were a part of the outside CASEA consultants rather than an integral part of the district. We believe this perception was intensified among those personnel who never actually participated in any of the organizational training as a result of certain fears many of them formed about what the CASEA consultants--and consequently the OSs--might ask them to do. The most prominent fear, we believe, was the fear of self-disclosure and release of strong emotion that many people associate with "sensitivity training." We believe this misapprehension was fed by the attendance by the principals at the human relations laboratory in June, 1968. That event consisted mostly of experience in "T-groups," with personal development rather than organizational development as the goal. Some principals communicated the belief to teachers that the training done by the CASEA consultants and OSs would be similar to

their T-group experience. The CASEA consultants, especially, should have devoted more time to demonstrating the nature of organizational training to interested teachers in the district.

The entire project became much stronger as groups within the district began to ask for training. After some six months of experience with organizational training, the specialists let it be known that they would respond to invitations but would no longer attempt to initiate interventions. Invitations were more numerous than the OSs could accept. All those interventions we listed earlier as having taken place after February, 1970, as well as a number of smaller activities, were the result of invitations.

The most serious threat to the project related to the professional expectations and workloads of the specialists. The Kent district already was involved in several change-oriented programs when the organizational specialists program was introduced. Many of the first cadre of specialists were committed to other programs considered beneficial, and there were several persons in conflict over which of the projects should receive highest priority. Seventeen of the original 23 specialists gave this project high priority, but only with considerable extra time being spent beyond that anticipated. Other districts should seek clear commitments from their specialists with the understanding that some extra time will be required to make the project successful.

SUMMARY

School districts should proceed carefully when developing a cadre of organizational specialists. The district should involve representatives of all ranks and types of jobs in the early phases, demonstrate repeatedly the nature of organizational training in various segments of the district, and wait for subgroups in the district to ask for help.

Administrators and influential teachers should be encouraged to indicate their support of the project in concrete ways; payment for training events, offer of secretarial services, and offer of space for meetings and storage of training supplies. Since most organizational specialists will be expending a great deal of extra time and energy in the project, the fragile relationship between the district and the project must be carefully nurtured.

If these guidelines are followed, a school district will find that the development of a cadre of specialists in organizational training can be a relatively inexpensive way of refurbishing ineffective group processes and of bringing about a greater capacity for self-renewal.

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